

Transportation Advisory Board
14 November 2013
Handout - Agenda 6/3
Regional Studies Update

**US 36 Mayors/Commissioners Coalition
(MCC)**

Boulder County

City of Boulder

City & County of
Broomfield

City of Louisville

Town of Superior

City of Westminster

October 25, 2013

Board of Directors
Regional Transportation District
1600 Market Street
Denver, CO 80202

Dear RTD Board of Directors:

The U.S. 36 Mayors and Commissioners Coalition (MCC), along with the City of Longmont, have spent significant efforts working together to develop a path forward on transit investments in the Northwest Corridor. Following much discussion, debate and deliberation, we are pleased to announce a conceptual consensus.

This consensus is predicated on information received to date through the Northwest Area Mobility Study (NAMS). It also assumes a successful vote on a transportation ballot initiative in 2014 (MPACT 64), which would provide substantial transit revenue to RTD over the 15-year life of the tax. The MCC and the City of Longmont expect that a significant portion of these revenues would be committed to the Northwest Corridor. While exact amounts are continuing to be developed, the MCC and the City of Longmont formally request that RTD provide a financial analysis that shows when Northwest Rail could be completed with a significant amount of additional revenues through MPACT 64.

Finally, and most importantly, the MCC and City of Longmont recognize the commitment made to voters regarding Northwest Rail in the 2004 FasTracks election and the ongoing public expectation that rail will be built in the corridor. The public expects visible mobility improvements in the short term if they are to be expected to support additional funding. At the same time, the MCC and City of Longmont understand financial challenges to completing the line, along with requirements and complications that ensue from sharing this line with Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) freight traffic. Due in to these challenges, the coalition recognizes that all other FasTracks corridors are likely to be completed prior to Northwest Rail.

With these considerations in mind, the MCC and City of Longmont's consensus framework includes the following:

- Early Action Rail/BRT Projects: Funds from the first years of MPACT 64 would be programmed to provide near-term Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) mobility improvements, along with preparatory investments in the rail corridor that would provide a tangible benefit throughout the corridor.
 - Highway portion of MPACT 64 would include BRT roadway infrastructure investments on State Highway 119, State Highway 7, State Highway 287, 28th Street/Broadway, (connecting U.S. 36 to Boulder Junction/14th & Walnut), and a connection from Louisville/Lafayette to U.S. 36 via SH 42/95th Street per the final recommendations of NAMS.
 - Transit portion of MPACT 64 would provide funding to construct FasTracks and identified non-FasTracks rail stations (88th Avenue, 116th Avenue, East Boulder, Twin Peaks) and related infrastructure improvements (i.e. structured parking, street/pathway connections).

In the interim before rail service, these station investments would be served by BRT, as identified above with transit service and vehicles. \$17 million has already been identified from EAGLE P3 savings for the Downtown Longmont station.

- o In anticipation of commuter rail service, MPACT 64 would also provide funding in the early years for the establishment of railroad crossing quiet zones along the length of the Northwest Corridor. This would provide an immediate benefit to communities all along the corridor.


Northwest Commuter Rail: The MCC and the City of Longmont recognize the likelihood of RTD's prioritization of the completion of other rail corridors and extensions before further substantial investments are made for Northwest Commuter Rail. With this in mind, the MCC and the City of Longmont acknowledge that funding in the early years of MPACT 64 might not be allocated to build the rail service, but we expect funding to be dedicated to construction of a significant portion of Northwest Commuter Rail in the later years of the MPACT 64 tax. These MPACT 64 funds would be combined with FasTracks revenue and bonding capacity in these latter years to complete the entire Northwest Commuter Rail line to Longmont. As stated above, the MCC and the City of Longmont need RTD to provide a financial analysis that shows when Northwest Rail could be completed under this type of scenario. Accordingly, the MCC and City of Longmont request that RTD reserve its TABOR bonding capacity to execute the financing of Northwest Commuter Rail under this approach. When the implementation plan and timeline and firm funding for construction of NW Rail are established, negotiations on the purchase of operating rights from BNSF should be initiated.

- Plan Adjustments: The MCC and City of Longmont understand future uncertainties regarding negotiations with BNSF and other factors. If a supermajority among Boulder County, the City of Boulder, the City and County of Broomfield, the City of Longmont, the City of Louisville, the Town of Superior and the City of Westminster determine that completion of the Northwest Commuter Rail is either impossible or simply undesirable, RTD would either re-direct the funding for alternative transit/mobility investments in the Northwest Corridor in a manner that is acceptable to all of these communities or return the accrued funding to the voters in the region. A super-majority would require an affirmative vote of five of the seven jurisdictions' governing bodies to proceed with any potential change. An intergovernmental agreement should be developed between RTD and the MCC and City of Longmont prior to passage of MPACT 64 to detail the process for deciding upon a plan for alternative transit/mobility investments.
- I-25 Bi-Directional Managed Lanes: The MCC and City of Longmont's interests in achieving bi-directional managed lane service between U.S. 36 and downtown Denver remains a top priority. While the MCC and the City of Longmont remain committed to working on this issue, any improvements to facilitate bi-directional service benefit the broader region and should thus be funded through the Colorado Department of Transportation independent of funding for the Northwest Corridor.

This consensus is centered on a scenario where additional revenue is available under MPACT 64. In the event there is an absence of funds in the near term, the MCC and the City of Longmont will work to seek other funding to complete the early action rail/BRT items listed above and will advocate for statewide/region-wide highway funding to solve the bi-directional issue on the I-25. The MCC and the City of Longmont are also committed to working on BRT service for Highway 119 between Longmont and Boulder as the initial BRT priority.

The MCC and the City of Longmont thank RTD and our other regional partners for working with us through NAMS and other venues on this challenging consensus process. Collectively, the MCC and the City of Longmont feel that this consensus approach is realistic and equitable, while respecting the will of the voters in 2004.

Sincerely,



Robert Muckle,
Mayor, City of Louisville (on behalf of the MCC and the City of Longmont)

Cc: Phil Washington, Bill Van Meter, Chris Quinn